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QUESTIONABLE NATIONALISMS AND CHICANERY OF THEIR ALTERNATIVES

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**Abstract**

There are different types of nationalism. Similarly, Cosmopolitanism/Internationalism is not a single encompassing idea but it too comes in different varieties. The kinds of cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive, and the relationships among them are clarified. Kashmir's tortured history has many contours to negotiate. In his classic defense of free speech, John Stuart Mill laid down the 'harm principle'. To say that Kashmir is a disputed territory is to state a simple fact. To recognize that there is also a dispute about the constitutional future of Kashmir is recognition of the reality. If self-esteem is essential for a human being, then positive patriotism is necessary for a nation and a citizen. There are and have been alternatives to nationalism. They are the variants of cosmopolitanism/Universalism. Although many of the alternatives have their own pitfalls or appear unrealistic in the present time, they are nonetheless accepted as something to be worked on or worked towards. Forcing anything into a system untimely may cause more damage than help. Kashmir situation is like Khalistan movement of the eighties. Its leaders

demanded for plebiscite. But what happened later? With no other option, military had to enter Golden temple; this cost the life of Indira Gandhi. Plebiscite will be only a mockery of itself if it is held in a tensed state. May be a good number of countries should come forward and work towards a practical globalized identity.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, Colonization, Harm-principle, Patriotism, Human-dignity, Plebiscite,

Reiterating that Kashmir was not an integral part of India, Arundhati Roy has been accusing India of launching "a protracted war" to suppress the ongoing movement in Kashmir by its military might. "I believe Kashmir is not an integral part of India. It is a historical fact," (Roy, Arundhati). For her Nationalism of one kind or another was the cause of most of the genocide of the twentieth century. Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people's brains and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead. Though she may offer elaborate justification, her

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position upsets larger sections, including academic ones, of India. There are different types of nationalism like Ethnic nationalism, Civic nationalism, Expansionist nationalism, Romantic nationalism, Cultural nationalism, Post colonial nationalism, Liberation nationalism, Left-wing nationalism, Liberal nationalism, Religious nationalism, Pan-nationalism and Diaspora nationalism. In the light of this we have to recognize that the concept of nationalism is many a time partial and being under construction. Similarly, Cosmopolitanism/Internationalism is not a single encompassing idea but rather comes in at least six different varieties, which have often been conflated in previous literature. The six varieties are: (1) moral cosmopolitanism, the view that all humans belong to a single moral community; political cosmopolitanism, which advocates (2) reform of the international political and legal order or (3) a strong notion of human rights; (4) cultural cosmopolitanism, which emphasizes the value of global cultural pluralism; (5) economic cosmopolitanism, which aims at establishing a global free market; and (6) the romantic ideal of humanity as united by faith and love. These six kinds of cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive, and the relationships among them are clarified. Are Roy's views truncated? How to account for the larger issues of History? What fits well a multicultural country like India which inherently has many nationalistic characters and identities? What are the responsibilities of a writer that serves beyond a hit and run exercise? Venkatesan Vembu echoes a fact that

is rightly accepted by many, when he says that History doesn't flow in straight lines, but in contours, and in Kashmir's tortured history there are many contours to negotiate. The Indian state may not always have got it right in Kashmir, but Roy's black-and-white delineation represents a colossal and intellectually questionable oversimplification of the problem without sufficient appreciation of the fanatical geopolitical forces at work. It also takes her farther down the slippery slope of shrill and decidedly dangerous sloganeering which has enormous lethal consequences in the real world. Perhaps she should break the spell that her own hypnotic prose appears to have on herself and her increasingly fanatical flock of followers. Venkatesan Vembu, "Arundhati Roy is dangerously wrong on Kashmir" DNA, 27 October 2010.

Post-colonial literature attempts to examine the effects of decolonisation. One of the major themes of post-colonial literature is nationalism and its failures. The dissenting so called post-nationalists still cling to the nationalist politics of the anti-imperialist struggle and because they cling to nationalism and in some way to its producer, capitalism, they often cannot fully imagine an alternative. Or, a resistor of degenerated nationalism too fails to contrive a useful alternative and this inability, perhaps as in Roy, tends to undo the newly founded independence without a final vision. Any abstraction or ideal has to be framed in reality howsoever rude it is, failing

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which, 'the centre cannot hold'. The chicanery of poor alternatives renders the older things harmless or a kind of necessity. However, on other count, we need to be alive to the freedom of expression of any person. In his classic defense of free speech, *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill laid down what is known as the 'harm principle' (Mill).

It postulates that the only justification for silencing a person against his will is to prevent him from causing harm to others. It is to this powerful libertarian mid-19th century principle that we owe the idea that free speech cannot be proscribed merely because we find it disagreeable, and that curbs may be imposed only if such expression constitutes a direct, explicit, and unequivocal incitement to violence. There is no such nexus in Ms Roy's statements on Kashmir, which are shaped around the theme of gross human rights violations. To say that Kashmir is a disputed territory is to state a simple fact. To recognize that there is also a dispute about the constitutional future of Kashmir is recognition of the reality there. To say that the status of Kashmir is a bone of contention between different groups who live there is also a matter of fact. Perhaps a solution would then emerge over time. Still, the question is whether it is correct to make Kashmir independent. Does it help the country or Kashmir? What is the role of nationalism around these choices? Again, the answer to these could be just an illusion.

But then, what about national integration? If national integration is a major value under the umbrella of a state, comprising the nuances and questions of population, territory, government and sovereignty, demystification of nationalism is a minor value. If self-esteem is essential for a human being, then positive patriotism is necessary for a nation and a citizen. May be what is reasonable would be check it within its extreme points. It is a healthy identity. It is essential for at least a mass, though a few individuals can surpass it and remain normal. Then is it a right thing to dilute stands in defence of dubious issues like "free speech", "death penalty" etc. These are issues that are usually used by criminals to defend their shady agenda expressed in politically correct terms. A nation that ruthlessly crushes sedition, inflammatory speech, is a nation that stays and moves together. Free Speech does not guarantee any responsible expressions. We have evidence in the media every moment. The more and more we speak about these issues, the more we complicate them. With diplomacy, dialogue or ruthless force, any effort at secession should be put down. After that starts the long process of building the economy of that place. Once economy is built, people will not have time for such divisive talk. But for that to start, we need a conducive atmosphere. Encouraged by a bankrupt state like Pakistan, which has a bomb in one hand and a begging bowl on the other, intellectuals jumping into engagement of incomprehensive history judgements on it does not look acceptable.

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It is argued that the imposition of the concept of the nation state on other parts of the world by the European colonizers, the divisions of ancient civilizations brought about by modern political boundaries have given rise to many of the enduring conflicts of the post colonial period including Kashmir. With globalisation and the evolving global village, should we not endeavor to organise the affairs of the human society on a global scale rather than on the basis of conflicting national interests? True. But that is possible when we have peace in the state and we can not move in the direction of truth or goodness in a war like situation. We can think of Tagore's ideas of nationalism which are really enlightening. But they remained utopian for Japanese because of the tension of war. The literary historian Sujith Mukherjee says: "When Tagore said that Western society was being dehumanized by excessive organization, it was pointed out that lack of organization had not brought happiness to India". (Mukherjee). This can be applied to nationalism as well. Excessive and irrational nationalism is not good for the world and the lack of reasonable and healthy nationalism is not good for a nation. This would hold good till the institution of nation exists. True, Tagore's Nationalism and such theories have influenced many makers of modern India like Gandhi and Nehru. It is also necessary to get exposed to them. It is very relevant in the light of xenophobia, sectarianism, violence and intolerance. They are valuable. But the

principles of those ideals cannot be applied in a deliberately disturbed context like Kashmir. Just think of India's role in Sri Lanka and Pakistan's role in Kashmir. Can a blanket judgement be given in one sweep in both the cases? Can we see Roy's views as well founded as Tagore's or Ambedkar's? We need to respect the broadened or undone nationalism but be practical till a proper time. It is the case of trusting one's neighbor and yet locking the door.

In Postcolonial studies, nationalism is frequently characterized as a movement that promotes the interests of a particular group while claiming to represent the whole. It is the elitist interests of the bourgeoisie that nationalism is alleged to serve, necessarily sacrificing or ignoring the interests of subaltern groups. Anti national nationalists such as Cabral, Cesaire, and Fanon, Tagore could not have been more concerned about the dangers elite nationalism, nationalism that they anticipated and also witnessed coming into postcolonial power in a number of states. But these concerns could be defeated by the elements that doctor a political situation in favour of forces that have no respect for globalism or oneness. Since cosmopolitanism relates basically to human values, it is the doctrine of universal human rights which constitutes its vital core. In this value-centered conception, neither nationalism nor localism is to be considered the main antagonist of cosmopolitanism.

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There are and have been alternatives to nationalism. They are the variants of cosmopolitanism which are mentioned earlier. Although many of the alternatives have their own pitfalls or appear unrealistic in the present time, they are nonetheless accepted as something to be worked on or worked towards. Forcing anything into a system untimely may cause more damage than help. Global governance and the promotion of cosmopolitan notions of coexistence should ideally replace nationalisms. An acceptance of human particularism must be incorporated into any project to foster more global cooperation. Hence, projects for more international harmony must redefine how interests are defined and how peace and security are reached as opposed to merely basing future forms of human organization on ethics alone. Till a point of time when this is achieved to a considerable measure, we should not lose the strength of nationalism nor allow it to weaken humanism. In the process, a high level of law and order problem and its containment should not become a yardstick to study the facts of nationalism or otherwise in operation in the true sense. Ideas bereft of these and attacking a particular situation like Kashmir does not render much service to any ideology.

Kashmir situation is like Khalistan movement of the eighties. Its leaders demanded for plebiscite. But what happened later? With no other option, military had to enter Golden temple; this cost the life of Indira Gandhi.

Plebiscite will be only a mockery of itself if it is held in a tensed state. Any state, district may want to free itself from the national fold. However, the military activities should not cross the limit of human dignity.

Working on several related areas that address the global legacy of European nationalism and empire-building, researchers in the Nation, Identity and the Postcolonial group specialize in cultural nationalism, colonial sovereignty, multi-ethnic identities, diasporas / trans-national formations, regional postcolonial literatures, responses to war and fascism, and landscape and identity.

For Arundhati Roy, Nationalism of one kind or another was the cause of most of the genocide of the twentieth century. Any sensitive person accepts this opinion. But our polity, all over the world, is still clumsy. The worst fears have come out in Wekileaks. Comparatively, India is soft and straight forward country. If our liberalism reaches a point of gullibility, one should imagine the imminent dangers. May be a good number of countries should come forward and work towards a practical globalized identity. But it takes time to be optimistic. We all know the plight of the UN. When Cosmopolitanism is an illusion to a great measure, at global level at present time, we cannot reciprocate it with real antinationalism. True, someone must begin with the ideology. Honestly, we are not big enough to lead such a mechanism putting our interests at stake. A

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moderate nationalism that is bereft of aggressive attitudes and which accommodates cosmopolitan concerns should be strength of a country in practical terms.

Roy has once again stirred up the hornet's nest with her comments on Jammu and Kashmir. She claims that Pakistan has never deployed its military against its own people. "The Pakistani military was never used against its own people". According to her, the "Indian state" has repeatedly done so, in a video that circulated online in August 2019. Taking to Twitter, Tarek Fatah, a former leftist student leader and a journalist from Canada, who is one of the most vociferous critics of Pakistan, the country where he was born wrote "Pakistan has never deployed its military against its own

people. Was she blind and deaf when 3 million died in the Bangla Desh genocide by Pak Army in 1971? Is she unaware of Baluchistan? She is literally reading off a Pakistan ISI briefing note.  
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